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**FREDDY ABAD, LEADER OF VIOLENT ROBBERY CREW, CONVICTED
BY A FEDERAL JURY IN MANHATTAN OF MURDER AND ROBBERY**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that late today a Manhattan federal jury convicted defendant FREDDY ABAD, a/k/a "Jose," a/k/a "Freddy Antonio Abad," a/k/a "Ramon Sanchez," a/k/a "Luis Fernandez," a/k/a "Freddy Gonzalez," a/k/a "Tonito," of murder, conspiracy to commit robbery, robbery and unlawful possession of a firearm.

According to the evidence at trial, ABAD was the leader of a racketeering enterprise that was based in the vicinity of Andrews Avenue in the Bronx, New York (the "Andrews Avenue Enterprise"). The Andrews Avenue Enterprise was a criminal organization whose members - including its leader, ABAD - committed armed robberies, kidnappings, narcotics trafficking and multiple murders in, among other places, the New York City metropolitan area from about 1992 to about 1996.

The evidence at trial established that from 1992 to 1996, ABAD and his crew of violent robbers committed dozens of armed robberies, primarily targeting drug dealers. The evidence showed

that ABAD was the leader of the organization. ABAD obtained the inside information about where and when certain drug dealers would stash their narcotics and cash, planned the robberies, selected the particular members of the crew who would participate, handed out the guns, and directed the members of the group when the robberies took place. In connection with those robberies, ABAD's crew regularly carried guns - including machine guns - and threatened and beat the victims. On at least one occasion, ABAD and other members of the crew kidnapped one of their victims. The evidence at trial also showed that members of the organization were involved in committing at least three separate murders.

Specifically, the evidence showed that on March 26, 1994, a member of ABAD's crew, while engaged in a robbery of a Queens bodega planned by ABAD, murdered Kasem Al-Fallahy, a worker in a bodega located at 111-01 41st Avenue, Queens, New York. The evidence also showed that, on April 1, 1994, another member of ABAD's crew, upon orders from ABAD, murdered Rafael Eleazar Torres, in the vicinity of Riverside Park and 160th Street, in Manhattan.

The evidence at trial further established that, during the third murder, which occurred on September 7, 1996, ABAD himself shot and murdered Hilario DeJesus at his home on 65 Ft. Washington Avenue in upper Manhattan. The evidence showed that DeJesus was a drug dealer whom ABAD had robbed previously, and who had been threatening ABAD in the weeks prior to September 7, 1996, including attempting to kidnap ABAD.

On that day, ABAD and three of his criminal associates forced their way into DeJesus's home, where DeJesus and a large number of his relatives - including several children - had gathered for a family meal. ABAD was armed with a machine gun, and two of the other members of his crew were also armed. The evidence established that DeJesus was dragged to a back room, gagged and tied with his hands behind his back while ABAD searched the apartment for money. DeJesus was beaten and threatened. After finding approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 in cash, ABAD went to the room where DeJesus was tied up. ABAD took his machine gun and fired a burst of bullets at DeJesus at point blank range, killing him, while DeJesus's family - including his wife, mother, and children - were in the next room. The evidence showed that ABAD killed DeJesus in order to protect and maintain ABAD's position as the head of the Andrews Avenue Enterprise because he viewed DeJesus as a threat to himself, and therefore to his robbery crew.

The evidence at trial included testimony by two members of DeJesus's family who were in the apartment on the night of his murder, other eyewitnesses to that crime and various forms of physical evidence, including one of the guns that was used during the robbery of Hilario DeJesus on September 7, 1996.

Following the two and a half-week trial, the jury

convicted ABAD of all counts charged in the Indictment: one count of murder in aid of racketeering, one count of conspiracy to commit robbery, one count of robbery, one count of unlawful use of a firearm, and one count of unlawful use of a firearm to commit murder.

ABAD, 32, who lives in the Bronx, New York, faces a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment.

United States District Judge GEORGE B. DANIELS scheduled sentencing for April 6, 2005.

Mr. KELLEY praised the investigative efforts of the New York City Police Department, New York State Police, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Assistant United States Attorneys DAVID M. RODY and MARK A. RACANELLI are in charge of the prosecution.

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